

***Thicker Than Blood***

**C.J. Darlington**

**Reviewed by: Courtney Cheng, 16**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Christy Williams is a thirty-three-year-old woman who has lost her way in the world. Following her parents' death when she was eighteen, Christy leads a life of drinking, smoking, and running away from her past, including her younger sister. On top of the constant struggle to make ends meet, Christy must deal with her vengeful ex-boyfriend, Vince. Vince pins Christy as the thief of many antique books at work, sets fire to her apartment, and plays a cunning game of cat-and-mouse with her by stalking and threatening her. Fed up with all of the drama, Christy runs away from the remains of her tattered old life to find her younger sister, May. Even though May has her own set of troubles regarding the ownership of her ranch, she takes Christy under her wing and together, the two sisters begin to mend their lives as a family once more.

*Thicker Than Blood* is an advanced chapter book intended for readers in grades 7 through 9. The plotline of the novel is intense, captivating the reader from the very first page. I really liked the way Darlington set up the novel, first introducing the two sisters separately. As the conflict progressed, the sisters' lives became closer and closer entwined with the others through interactions with mutual friends, finally leading to their reunion. The conflicts that Christy and May go through are very realistic, which helped pique my interest in the book.

But while the rising action of the novel builds up quickly, the falling action falls short of its precedent. Darlington has two small climaxes in her writing, causing readers to believe that the first of the two is the actual ending. When I finally reached the end, it seemed to fall short of my expectations. The conclusion tied up all the loose ends, but did so very quickly, as if there wasn't anything better to say or comment on. Overall, I found *Thicker Than Blood* a decent read, and I would definitely suggest it as a book to check out of the library.